

XX.—Notes on the Birds of the Lower Petchora. By HENRY SEEBOHM, F.Z.S., and JOHN A. HARVIE BROWN.

[Continued from page 126.]

(Plate V.)

RUTICILLA PHENICURA (L.).

We shot the first Redstart on 12th May, in the streets of Ust Zylma. We afterwards found it sparingly on the outskirts of the birch-forests both near Ust Zylma and Habariki; but we did not meet with it further north. We found it to be one of the shyest of the small birds of the district.

SAXICOLA CENANTHE (L.).

We saw the first Wheatear on 21st May, at Ust Zylma. It afterwards became rather common there. Further north it was rarer, but we saw it as far as Dvoinik.

PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA (L.).

The Asiatic form of the Stonechat, with white upper tail-coverts, was not uncommon in suitable localities near Ust Zylma and Habariki; but we did not meet with it further north.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TROCHILUS (L.).

The Willow-Wren is by far the commonest Warbler in the extreme north of Europe. Seebohm found it abundant on the fjelds of Norway from the North Cape to the Varanger fjord. Harvie Brown and Alston found it equally common at Archangel. In their paper in 'The Ibis' (Jan. 1873), *P. eversmanni** only was mentioned; but a re-examination of the skins proves that *P. trochilus* is the commoner bird. In the valley of the Petchora we found it common, both in the forests of Ust Zylma and the willow-swamps on the islands of the delta and the tundra. As we proceeded far north it became somewhat rarer; but we found it among the dwarf willows at Dvoinik, the most northerly point on the tundra which we visited. We never before so thoroughly realized its right to the name of Willow-Warbler. We first heard the familiar note of this

* *P. eversmanni* (Midd. nec Bp.) will probably rank as a synonym of *P. borealis* (Blasius).

bird on the 20th May, but did not succeed in obtaining a specimen until the 23rd, by which time it had become common. At one time we were under the impression that there must be two species of these birds, one of them a smaller, more buff-breasted, and much more silent bird; and we consequently brought home more than forty skins for examination. We are now convinced that the difference in size and habits is merely the difference of sex.

On the 12th June, as we were slowly creeping down the great river, we stopped to cook under the lee of a steep bank of the Petchora, just before we entered the delta. The bank was wooded to the water's edge; and Seebohm spent some hours exploring the dwarf forest. Willow-Wrens were common; and his attention was arrested by one which was most vociferously uttering a note unlike any that he had ever heard from a Willow-Warbler. The note reminded him somewhat of the spitting of a cat, a hissing sound, which he attempted on the spot to express in words. He shot the bird and tied to its leg a label marked *Tuz-zuk Warbler*, to remind him of the note. The bird proved to be a female. The respective lengths of the wing and tail agree with female *P. trochilus*; but the wing-formula is different. Out of at least a hundred skins of *P. trochilus* which Seebohm has examined, he has always found the second primary intermediate in length between the fifth and sixth. In the bird in question the second primary is intermediate in length between the sixth and seventh. Whether this bird be a different species or not requires further investigation.

PHYLLOSCOPUS BOREALIS (Blasius).

In Seebohm's collection there are three skins of this species from North-east Russia. One was shot by Harvie Brown and Alston near Archangel; a second was procured by Piottuch at Mesen; and the third was shot by Seebohm in the same locality as the variety of *P. trochilus* just mentioned, and whilst he was searching for a second specimen. He remarked in his diary at the time that the note was more rapid than that of *P. trochilus*, and more resembling that of the Whitethroat. In fact the

song is more that of a *Hypolais*, a genus which the bird also resembles in the large size and width of the bill. This species is a very distinct one. In size and colour it resembles *P. trochilus*, but has a distinct pale bar across the wings, caused by the wing-coverts being pale at the tips. The wing-formula is the same, except that the bastard primary is very much less, in fact as small as that of *P. sibilatrix*. It further resembles *P. sibilatrix* in having a comparatively shorter tail. We only met with this one specimen of *P. borealis*, and are consequently unable to give any further information respecting it.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TRISTIS (Blyth).

On 22nd May we shot a small Warbler uttering a plaintive call-note (a single note repeated at intervals) that we were unfamiliar with. The bird resembled a Chiffchaff in size, length of wing and tail, and wing-formula, but differed from that bird in having no yellow on the belly and under tail-coverts, and also in having black legs, instead of dark brown. On the following day we heard a loud call-note, reminding us of that of the Chiffchaff, but somewhat different; and shortly afterwards we watched the bird singing on a spruce-fir. The song was a repetition of its call-note with a few more musical notes introduced. This bird proved to be the same as that we had shot on the previous day. We met with it repeatedly in the same valley near Ust Zylma, but found it very difficult to shoot. It was still more abundant on the willow-covered islands of the delta, and we obtained several more specimens and one nest and seven eggs. Upon our return home we submitted our skins to our friend Mr. Dresser, who pronounced the bird to be *P. tristis* of Blyth. We are fortunate in being able to add this species to the fauna of the Western Palearctic region, and have ventured to give it the English name of the Siberian Chiffchaff. This bird has hitherto been known as a winter visitor to India, though Mr. Brooks states, but without naming his authority, that it breeds in Ladak, mentioning the eggs, however, as being still amongst the desiderata in collections (*vide* Ibis, 1872, p. 31).

PHYLLOSCOPUS NEGLECTUS (Hume).

In 'The Ibis' for 1869, p. 236, Mr. W. E. Brooks writes:—"I have, however, a single specimen, a female, of a *Phylloscopus* which I cannot make out. This bird exactly resembles in size and colour *P. brevirostris*" (*tristis*), "but is entirely without any yellow under the wings, nor is there any tinge of greenish yellow on the edges of the lesser wing-coverts. This bird Mr. Hume pronounced to be the English Chiffchaff (*P. rufus*), because it was white under the wings instead of yellow." To this Mr. Allen Hume replies in 'The Ibis' for 1870, page 143, "there has been some mistake between Mr. Brooks and myself about the *Phylloscopus* with a white wing-lining. The bird he refers to is the species I call *Phylloscopus neglectus*," &c. If this species be a good one, which there seems to be some reason to doubt, we have much pleasure in being able to add it to the European fauna. On 3rd June Seebohm shot a male *Phylloscopus* which agrees with Mr. Hume's description. It differs from *P. tristis* in having white instead of yellow axillaries, in having the edges of the primaries without any tinge of yellow, in having a decidedly shorter tail, and a slightly smaller bastard primary. It was frequenting some tall willows in a pine-forest at Habariki. We may also remark that some of the small *Phylloscopi* which we observed in the same neighbourhood, appeared to have a richer and more varied song than those we heard at Ust Zylma, and may have been this species.

CALAMODYTA PHRAGMITIS (Bechst.).

Next to the Willow-Wren the Sedge-Warbler is certainly the commonest songster on the willow-swamps of the islands of the delta. Curiously enough, we did not meet with this bird either at Ust Zylma or at Habariki. We first met with it on the Yorsa river. As the Bluethroat became rarer the Sedge-Warbler became commoner. We did not find it north of the delta; nor did it appear to frequent the willow-swamps which we frequently met with on the tundra.

PARUS KAMCHATKENSIS, Bp.

We met with this eastern representative of the Northern

Marsh-Tit sparingly at Ust Zylma and Habariki as long as snow continued on the ground, but did not see it afterwards.

PARUS CINCTUS, Bodd.

We found one pair of the Lap Titmouse at Ust Zylma, and met with it more abundantly at Habariki. Further north it again became rarer, and the last specimens we procured were frequenting a willow-swamp a few miles to the north of the arctic circle. On comparing our specimens with the bird figured in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe,' and with his type of *P. grisescens*, we remark that our birds approach the latter species in being less russet on the flanks, and showing more conspicuously the white edgings to the wing- and tail-feathers than the western form.

AMPELIS GARRULUS, L.

We shot a pair of Waxwings at Habariki on 4th June; and Seebohm saw a party of six flying north on the 12th, shortly before we reached the Yorsa river. In the frozen-market at St. Petersburg we bought a dozen of these beautiful birds for eighty kopecs; but they all turned out to be males. The pair we shot at Habariki were not in very good plumage, having very few and small wax appendages on the secondaries. The eggs in the female were very large, and the testes of the male very fully developed. As the yellow on the primaries is I-shaped and not V-shaped, we presume the male to be a young bird. In this pair the male differs from the female in the following particulars:—It is a larger bird, with longer wings and tail, and slightly larger crest. The black on the throat is much deeper in colour, and much more sharply defined. The bar of yellow on the tail is much broader. The wax appendages are larger, and there are more of them. The yellow on the primaries is more brilliant, and the white on the secondaries and on the wing-coverts is larger. Finally, the chestnut on the under tail-coverts is decidedly darker in shade. The difference in the colour of the under tail-coverts of the two sexes is about the same as that between a ripe horse-chestnut freshly taken from the husk, and one which has been exposed for a day or two to the air. This will probably be

found to be the easiest mode of distinguishing the sexes, as, so far as our observations extend, we have found it constant at all ages. Alston and Harvie Brown observed it at Archangel in 1872, and were always able to separate the sexes at a glance when the birds were procured.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA, L.

On the 26th May a Common-Swallow was seen at Ust Zylma skimming along the river-bank close to the houses of the town; and on the 3rd June we shot a single bird which was chasing the insects round the houses at Habariki. This appeared to be the single Swallow which makes a summer on the Lower Petchora; at least we saw no more afterwards. It is possible, however, that we left these localities before the main body arrived.

COTYLE RIPARIA (L.).

We saw the first Sand-Martin on the day we left Ust Zylma (10th June), between that place and Habariki. Afterwards we met with the species in small numbers at Gorodok and at Kuya, and obtained specimens. The unusually dark plumage was remarked in these and other specimens as being quite in striking contrast to that of specimens obtained in Great Britain (*vide* also Ibis, 1873, p. 59). Nowhere on the Petchora did we find the Sand-Martins so abundant as they are in summer on the islands of the Dvina at Archangel, where nearly every suitable bank holds a large colony (*loc. cit.*).

LAGOPUS ALBUS (Gm.).

Although we bought numbers of the Capercaillie and Hazel-Grouse for food from the native peasant sportsmen during our stay at Ust Zylma, we did not have a single Willow-Grouse brought to us until the 9th June. We were told by M. Známinsky and M. Sacharoff, and others, that "Kouropatki" are remarkable for their abundance in some seasons, and just as remarkable for their scarcity in others. On the tundra, in certain localities, as at Yooshina and Stanavoialachta, we found them plentiful; and they formed, along with Ducks and Geese, a staple article of our diet for many a day.

We met with them as far north as we went on the tundra,

viz. to Dvoinik, frequenting the low willow-bushes or knolls, and avoiding the long level stretches of bare tundra.

TETRAO TETRIX, L.

We only once met with this species, viz. between Yorsa and Chuvinski, some forty versts north of Habariki, where we found a nest containing five eggs on an island. The surrounding ground was covered with tall alder and birch; and long grass covered the raised bank which formed a break-water between the river and a lagoon, and upon which the nest was placed. The Greyhen was flushed off the nest, but not shot.

TETRAO UROGALLUS, L.

As with the last species, many Capercaillie hens were brought in for sale, at forty kopecs per brace. The peasants do not shoot the males, as they are not considered good food. Although we saw several Capercaillie cocks southward from Ust Zylma, we met with none there in the forests, nor at Habariki.

TETRASTES BONASIA (L.).

Many of these birds were sold to us by the peasants, costing twenty kopecs per brace, at Ust Zylma; but we had not the good luck to meet with any ourselves, either at that place or further north. Being a pine-forest species, it probably does not occur further north than Bougáeffskia, which is said to be upon the northern limit of the pine-woods along the river-banks.

CHARADRIUS PLUVIALIS, L.

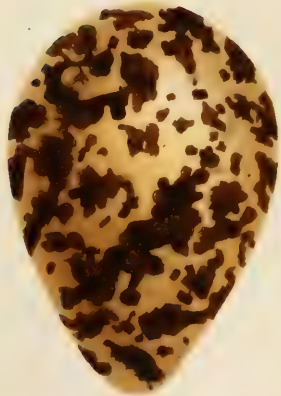
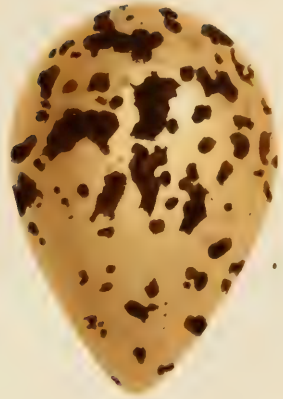
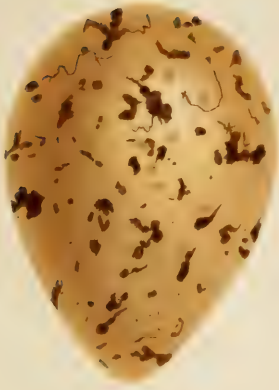
Many Golden Plovers passed during the time of migration, alighting occasionally in the fields on the hill-slopes behind the town to feed. At this season it is not difficult to call these migratory birds within range by an imitation of their note. We obtained the first specimens on the 17th May, and again met with the species at Habariki, where a single pair was haunting the newly sown fields close behind the village. After that a specimen was shot at Kuya by Seebohm, which has one of the axillary feathers slightly splashed with smoky

brown ; and we again met with Golden Plovers at Vassilkova, Yooshina, Stanavoialachta, and Dvoinik. They frequented totally different ground from the Grey Plovers, affecting the round exposed knolls in preference to the flat bogs, and being almost always found where the tundra had more of the rolling character of prairie, intersected by willow-patches and miniature valleys, narrow deep streams of pure sparkling water, and clear tarns surrounded with brushwood. It is worthy of note that we scarcely ever found the Golden and Grey Plovers frequenting the same kind of ground. If a patch of Grey-Plover ground lay surrounded by knolls of dryer tundra, that patch might hold its pair of Grey Plovers, which, when disturbed, would occasionally alight on the higher ground ; but it was rarely that we saw a Golden Plover settle on the hummocky ground at the base of the knolls, though in other countries (as, for instance, Scotland) the latter is often their favourite ground for breeding on. Several pairs of Golden Plovers were watched to their nests or shot at them. They exhibited, if any thing, rather more shyness than the Grey Plovers did, though in general habits and mode of approaching the nest there was scarcely any perceptible difference.

SQUATAROLA HELVETICA (Linn.).

We arrived at Alexievka on the 19th June, after a ten days' voyage down the river from Ust Zylma. We had left far behind us the thick forests of small spruce which crown the heights behind Ust Zylma, and the older forests of pine and spruce and larch at Habariki. We had glided past the dense thickets of tall birch, leaving the last of these behind at Viski, and had entered upon the true delta, the flat willow-covered islands of which had only a short time before been three or four feet under the overflow of the great river. As we approached Alexievka, we had seen afar off, with longing eyes, the low outline of the skirts of the Great Zémelskaya tundra upon the eastern bank of the river ; and we knew that it stretched away eastward to the Ural Mountains, and north-eastwards to the gates of the Kara Sea. We had landed on the willow-covered islands here and there during our voyage

Dec. 1837. 1. 1. 1.



C. J. Fleming del.

M. & H. Hard engr.

EGGS OF *ALUATAEOLA HELVETICA*

down the river and had secured some interesting species of birds; but on the whole we felt disappointed in the delta, with its never-ending almost impenetrable willow-swamps and winding "Kurias" and little pools of water. Our experience of every island was almost the same—the same landscape, the same conditions, the same bird-life; and we looked forward with eagerness to the real *new land*, the land of promise—Arkya Ya, the great land of the Samoyedes.

During all the time we remained at Ust Zylma, while the migration was going on, we had seen nothing of the Grey Plover. We saw many Plovers passing over, or resting or feeding in little flocks in the ploughed or newly sown fields; but all those which we shot or identified belonged to the common species. We had therefore little expectation of afterwards meeting with it at its breeding-haunts*.

But a glad surprise awaited us. On the 22nd June we at last had our wishes gratified. We crossed from Alexievka in our clumsy unmanageable boat, to the eastern or right bank of the river, and, climbing up the steep clay slope, stood upon the tundra. We had a large party on this our first day on the tundra—all our little force in fact,—Piottuch and ourselves, and our four men—Simeon the Samoyede, Little Feodor the half-breed, Gavriel and Big Feodor, Russians. Little did we guess as we stood on the top of the steep river-bank and gazed away inland over the wide expanse of moor and

* Much valuable information concerning the migrations and arrivals of some of our rarer European Waders on the Volga and Kama rivers is contained in a Russian work, of which we give the complete title below, and which we had an opportunity afterwards of consulting with Piottuch's assistance. In it the authors, speaking of the present species, inform us that it is seen on both migrations in May and September, in small flocks, in the neighbourhood of Kasan, but not every year. Thence, doubtless, these migratory flocks in spring descend the Petchora river as far as Ust Ussa (the mouth of the river Ussa), and spread over the Great Zémelskaya tundra northwards, without going round by Ust Zylma. The full title and reference to the above-mentioned work is as follows:—"Materials for forming a Biography of the Birds of the Volga," being Chapters II., III., and IV. of Part I, vol. i. of 'Descriptive Catalogue of the High School of the Imperial University of Kasan.' Edited by MM. Kovalovsky, Levakovsky, Golovinski, and Bogdánoff. Kasan: 1871.

bog, how soon one of the great prizes we had come so far in the hopes of gaining would be within our grasp.

After crossing over a tract of moor sloping gently inland some versts from the river, and which was comparatively destitute of bird-life, raising a few Lapland Buntings and Red-throated Pipits, or an occasional Willow-Grouse or Dunlin, we came in view of a vast stretch of low hummocky tundra, its surface studded over with bright little pools and lakelets glancing in the sun. The low rounded hills beyond Vassilkova form the boundary-line to this great plain; and further off a higher range, appearing blue in the distance, is to be seen in the direction of Stanavoialachta, some forty versts lower down the river. Dotted over the tundra, as already observed, are tarns and round pools of water. These have overhanging peat- or green mossy banks. Curious hollows, apparently the dried-up beds of former lakes, occur also, having the same peat banks or mossy edges, the bottoms covered with long grass, marshy ground, thickets of Willow-scrub and stunted birch, and here and there a little open pool of water. Over the surface of the moor, where we found the birds breeding, are small patches of level black or brown peat-bog, which are destitute of vegetation in the centre, but covered with a species of yellowish brown *Sphagnum* round the edges. Crossing over these the foot sank to the depth of about 18 inches, and was then supported by the hard-frozen ground beneath. Winding about amongst these black bogs, like the network on the rind of a melon, are low narrow ridges, or wider plateaux, a foot or two in height, formed by innumerable hummocks of peat, covered with reindeer-moss, cranberries, and patches of the green leaves and red flowers of the arctic bramble (*Rubus arcticus*). A few plants also of the sweet-smelling *Ledum palustre* are scattered here and there over the ground. On these higher and drier ridges were the Grey Plovers' nests—simple shallow depressions in the moss or peaty soil, lined with a small handful of broken twigs and leaves of the surrounding plants. This description may be held generally to apply to all the places where we found the Grey Plover breeding. They preferred these low-

lying boggy tracts to the higher and more undulating parts of the tundra, in which latter situation we afterwards found the Golden Plover nesting.

Accompanied by Piottuch and the men, Harvie Brown walked on rapidly towards this seeming land of promise, keeping a sharp look-out for any species of Plover (because on the 18th Seebohm had shot a Golden Plover which had one of the axillary plumes splashed with smoky brown). They had not much hope or even thought, at the time, of finding the Grey Plover. When therefore a bird was seen about 200 yards off to rise from the tundra, and heard to utter a Plover's whistle, Harvie Brown at first took it for one of the common species; but he quickly saw his mistake when it again alighted somewhat nearer, and the strong contrast of the black and white parts of the plumage showed distinctly. He lost no time in putting the identity of the bird beyond a doubt by using his binocular. This was no sooner accomplished than the bird again took wing, and, rising high in the air, joined four others which were flying in erratic circles high overhead. These, as we afterwards came to learn, were the male birds. A reward was now offered to the men for the first nests they should find. Simeon set to work in a persevering patient manner, threading with slow step and sure the mazes of the network of hummocks, his hands crossed behind his back, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. Gavriel, the tall Russian, stalked away over the tundra until he disappeared over a distant rise. After a good hour's search Simeon was rewarded, and, waking up from his usual phlegma, cried out, "Yaitsa-yaitsa! dobra yaitsa!" ("The eggs, the eggs! the good eggs"); and Harvie Brown ran up to him.

Simeon was kneeling beside the nest with a quiet pleased smile on his face. The nest contained four eggs, intermediate in appearance between Golden Plover's eggs and Lapwing's. Immediately after, Seebohm joined in, and together we feasted our eyes for a brief space of time. It was then agreed that Harvie Brown should remain behind and wait for the bird, while the others moved away to renew the search. The following is extracted from Harvie Brown's Journal:—"I lay

down about forty yards from the nest, well concealed behind a ridge of the dryer ground; and very soon after I heard the cry of the birds. Then I saw them fly round, low over the tundra, and alight on the tops of the hummocks. Presently one ran towards me, stood up again on a hummock, and cried "Pl-wee," the first syllable short and low, the second louder and prolonged—shriller, I thought, than a Golden Plover's. The birds' behaviour near the nest appeared to me to be exactly similar to that of a Golden Plover—sitting erect on the higher hummocks, running rapidly across the hollows, whistling at intervals, then flying in a wide circle round the nest—not, like the more cautious Dotterel, running round the hummocks or grey stones, pausing in the hollows, silent, running over a ridge out of sight, head down, and reappearing from a diametrically opposite direction. I missed both barrels at the bird. I misjudged the distance, my eyes being almost level with the tops of the hummocks, and the intervening hollows being shut out from my range of vision. But it came again, and after a stalk I shot it. It was the male bird."

Early in the season we found it an easy matter to watch the birds to the nests; and it was thus that we found most of our nests. On this day, however, we found four nests by simply searching for them, Simeon finding two, Gavriel one, and Harvie Brown the fourth; at each of these nests one of the birds was shot. As we afterwards came to learn, the habits of the male and female differ somewhat, as with the Golden Plover, as the season advances. When the eggs are fresh, or slightly incubated, the hen is the more anxious parent, and is far more restless than the male, running backwards and forwards near the nest, approaching and retreating, and uttering the alarm-note, whilst the male stands for the most part silent, and for a considerable length of time in the same place. Later in the season, when the eggs are almost hatched, the male becomes as solicitous as the female, constantly uttering the alarm-note and shamming lameness or a broken wing. In one instance a male bird, when near the nest, suddenly ran across a grass-covered bit of flat bog, head down and bill open, lay down on his breast, and stretched out his wings to the full

extent along the ground, and for quite half a minute remained in this singular position.

The following are a few extracts from Harvie Brown's Journal.

(Concerning the cries of the birds, considerable difference exists between our respective opinions as to how they should be rendered in words. They are, however, three in number:—*first*, the call-note between male and female, a double whistle, the first syllable short, the second drawn out; *second*, the alarm-note, a single plaintive whistle, about a half note higher than that of a Golden Plover; and, *third*, a treble whistle, the second syllable having a lower intonation than the first and third. This latter is not so commonly used, and appears to be the call-note of the males to one another when flying apart from the females, and is generally uttered when the birds are flying high in the air. The males associate in small parties of three and four; and a peculiar phase of flight is then observable. They rise to a great height and dash about in erratic curves, or diving down impetuously, rapidly rise again; they then remain almost stationary, like a Temminck's Stint, raising the wings over the back until they nearly meet, and finally, flying with long Tern-like sweeps of the wings, utter their musical treble note.)

“*9th July, 1875.*—About 12 o'clock we went across to the tundra, this time higher up the river, beyond the ruined hut. Seebohm and I again renewed our search for Grey Plovers, and having found a pair, watched the female to the nest. This nest was placed at the foot of a ridge, close to damp ground, not on the top as was the case with the previous nests. We were a long time over this nest, quite an hour and a half, having at first lain down within ten yards of it. The bird, after we shifted our position, went on very quickly; and I shot her as she again moved off. These four eggs are lighter-coloured than any we have got hitherto.

“Shortly afterwards we saw a bird fly off just where Simeon some time before had been searching. We at once lay down; and in about ten or fifteen minutes the bird went onto the nest, which contained also four eggs. This nest was on

the top of a hummock, one of a ridge of dark peaty loam ; and the eggs are much darker. At the first nest to-day the birds were remarkably silent, and the female only once or twice uttered the single note before going onto the nest. The males generally arrive in the vicinity of the nest after the females do, remain stationary in one spot for a long time, and when the females settle on the nests, take wing and fly off. The males appear darker to the eye, blacker-breasted, and whiter over the eye ; but some females are much darker than others, and are nearly as dark as some males. As the season advances, the males retain their full plumage longer, whilst the female becomes much lighter, and the black on the breast becomes narrower.

“*25th July*.—At 150 yards distance a female appeared of a dull grey colour ; and at 15 yards only a narrow strip of black on the breast was discernible ; but at 150 yards the breast of the male seemed as black as ever.

“It was trying work to-day waiting to find these nests ; the mosquitoes swarmed over our hats and veils and clothes. As we lay looking along the ridges and across the hollows, they seemed like a mist on the tundra, and the unceasing hum of the legions around us dulled the sounds of the smaller bird-voices further off. They got inside our veils, they crept up our cavalry gauntlets and bit our wrists, or searched patiently for openings in the sewing, and they found out rents and thin places in our clothes. They blinded us with their legions, deafened us with their hum, nearly beat us off by their force of character and determination.

“*12th July*.—Later in the day Seebohm and I watched another pair of Grey Plovers ; but on this occasion, as with the last pair of birds, the male showed more finesse and anxiety than the female. We failed in marking the female to the nest, but went forward to the places where we had respectively seen her twice disappear. As it afterwards turned out, Seebohm went about 20 yards too far to the left, and I about the same to the right. Both birds flew round us in circles. I concluded that they had young, and Seebohm that they had eggs. We had despaired of finding them, eggs or

young, and were walking away, when we stumbled upon the nest, which contained three eggs. A young bird, apparently only very lately hatched, crouched within two feet of the nest, its yellow colour being very conspicuous against the grey lichen-covered ground. The young closely resemble the young of *Charadrius pluvialis*, but have the darker parts of the upper plumage larger and more conspicuous*.

“To-day we found great areas of tundra quite unoccupied by the species. They appear to be thinly scattered over the tundra, preferring the lower-lying damper portions, and where the hummocks lie in ridges and not broadcast. Doubtless they prefer these situations partly, if not wholly, on account of the greater quantity of yellow-green moss growing there, which must afford excellent concealment for the young, to which it closely approximates in colour. We have observed before, in Scotland, how difficult it is to detect young Golden Plover (as compared with some other young of Waders) as they lie flat upon the yellow patches of moss, head down, and legs drawn in under the body.”

We obtained several nests of eggs, besides the above, which were deeply incubated. These we laid upon warmed cotton-wool along with the young bird, and covered them all over lightly with goose's down. Early the following morning we started on a trip to the Golievski banks, which stretch across the entrance of the Petchora Gulf, in the Company's steamer; and we took the precious boxful of young and eggs along with us, having covered them over, down, cotton, and all, with a mosquito-veil. The sun was hot and the day fine; and five of the young were successfully hatched out, and were strong and healthy.

As will be seen from the plates, the eggs of the Grey Plover

* Since returning home Harvie Brown has compared specimens of the young of both species. Besides the above distinction, not to speak of the absence or presence of the hind toe, he finds that the young of the Golden Plover are brighter in colour, and that the white of the lower parts, where it joins the upper, is suffused with yellow, as also is the light-coloured collar on the back of the neck. In the young of the Grey Plover the dorsal plumage is duller in tinge, greener, and the white parts bordering on the yellow are purer.

are intermediate in appearance between those of the Golden Plover and Lapwing. The very dark variety is one of the set of four found on dark peaty ground, above alluded to; and the light-coloured variety is one of the set found at the base of the ridge of hummocks, where a quantity of dead and bleached *Sphagnum* covered the edges of the flat peat-bog. The former set of eggs was the only one found actually laid on peaty dark soil, and the latter the only set found at the base of the ridge amongst the bleached *Sphagnum*; and they present the extremes in darkness and lightness of ground-colour. In a series of sixteen eggs, measured by Harvie Brown, they are found to vary in size from $2\frac{4}{10}$ by $1\frac{7}{10}$ of an inch to $1\frac{3}{10}$ by $1\frac{4}{10}$ of an inch, agreeing with measurements of the eggs brought by Herr A. von Middendorff from Siberia (Dresser, 'Birds of Europe,' temporary vol. i.).

[To be continued.]

XXI.—*Notes on a 'Catalogue of the Accipitres in the British Museum,' by R. Bowdler Sharpe (1874).* By J. H. GURNEY.

[Continued from p. 76.]

HAVING concluded my last paper by a reference to the Buzzard of the Galapagos Islands, it may be convenient that I should next advert to another insular species, a native of a still more isolated habitat in the Pacific Ocean—*Buteo solitarius* of Peale.

The type specimen, which is preserved in the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, and which, I believe, is still unique, was obtained near Karakaloe Bay in the island of Hawaii, the largest of the Sandwich group, and was described by Peale under the above name in the first edition of 'The Zoology of the United-States Exploring Expedition,' published in 1848; but in the later edition of that work, published in 1858, and edited by Cassin, this species was removed by that ornithologist to the genus *Pandion*, with the following remark:—"This bird is strictly a member of a subgenus of the generic group *Pandion*, designated *Polioaëtus* by Dr. Kaup" (*vide op. cit.* p. 98).